

**ABSTRACT**

A substance for preventing, delaying the onset of, or treating one or more than one autoimmune disease, the substance comprising a polynucleotide construct comprising a polynucleotide sequence encoding the pro-apoptotic protein BAX and encoding one or more  
5 than one autoantigen for the autoimmune disease. A method for preventing, delaying the onset of or treating an autoimmune disease in a patient comprising selecting a patient who is susceptible to developing the autoimmune disease, who is developing the autoimmune disease or who has the autoimmune disease and administering to the patient one or more than one dose of a polynucleotide construct comprising a polynucleotide sequence encoding the pro-apoptotic  
10 protein BAX and encoding one or more than one autoantigen for an autoimmune disease, or comprising a polynucleotide sequence encoding the adenoviral protein E3-GP19k, or comprising a polynucleotide sequence encoding  $\Delta$ BCL-2.